

Board of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired
December 7, 2007
Holiday Inn Express, Ft. Pierre

Members Present: Rita Weber, Gaye Mattke, Wesley Scholl, Steve Kelsey, Deanne Curran, Angie Boddicker, Chuck Fullenkamp, Larry Wheeting, Gayle Aamold, and Ed Pinkman. Members Absent: Keith Bundy, Dennis White Shield, Dave Miller, and Mike Klimisch. Other Present: Eric Weiss, Jeff Kisecker, Brady Kerkman, and Becky Blume.

Rita Weber called the meeting to order. Introductions were made.

Larry Wheeting made a motion to approve the agenda. Wesley Scholl seconded. Motion carried.

Wesley Scholl made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 28, 2007, meeting. Gayle Aamold seconded. Motion carried.

Draft Annual Report: The Annual Report consists of the Board's activities, as well as, outcome data and accomplishments of the Agency. It is presented to the Governor and the Commissioner of RSA. A similar format will be used again this year with light colored paper and dark print for better contrast. The SBVI logo developed by Matt Daigle will be on the front cover. Matt's explanation of the logo is also included in the Board activities section of the report. Success stories are also included. Eric would like to have the report to the printer by the middle of the month in order to meet the December 31st deadline for submission to RSA. It was suggested that the graphs have a short explanation to describe what the data represents. The Agency had to provide its successes and challenges to DHS Secretary and a lot of that information can also be used in the annual report.

RSA is not interested in the success stories but wants to see numbers. It was the Board's recommendation to include success stories to demonstrate the impact services have on individual's lives. Eric is open to suggestions for a success story for the VR program.

Success stories may also be printed in the VISIONS newsletter. It was also mentioned to put the success stories on the website, however, there was not enough rotation when this was done in the past.

Larry Wheeting made the motion that with the time restrictions, Eric and Gaye proceed with finalizing and distributing the Annual Report. Gayle Aamold seconded. Motion carried.

Rita Weber thanked Eric for all his work on the Annual Report. Gaye thanked the Board for their input and ideas.

VISIONS newsletter: It was the Board's recommendation to implement the VISIONS newsletter twice a year. Gaye stated that she was surprised by the number of positive

comments in response to the reimplementation of the newsletter. The next publication will announce the public meetings, include a success story, AFB information and what's available on their website, and Focus on Success information. In addition, information will be included on NFB and SDAB local chapters and contact information for the organizations. The Peer Support group visit to Rehab Center was another suggestion for success story for VISIONS. Distribution is primarily by email, but alternative formats are available upon request. Gaye is going to change the format to 12 point font size since most of the recipients receive the newsletter by email.

Focus on Success: Focus on Success planning committee is making progress on presenters and topics. Information has been sent to NFB & SDAB asking for their ideas and participation in planning. SDAB had asked about holding their state convention in conjunction with Focus on Success but have since decided against it. Call for Papers will be sent out in the near future. Ollie Cantos verbally committed to being a presenter. He has been blind his entire life and works for the US Department of Justice.

There will be a \$100 "professional" registration fee. The registration fee for consumers, parents, students, etc. has not been set at this time. The conference will feature a luncheon instead of a banquet, and there will be a hospitality evening with vendors. The next planning meeting will be March 7, 2008, via video conference.

It is early in the planning but the committee is excited about the variety of topics and presenters. There will be topics for professionals, educators, parents, consumers, students, Board members, etc.

It may be possible that schools will pay for parent training if it is included in the students IEP. Gaye reported there was a lot of interest from Special Ed educators and parents whom she spoke with at the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Task Force meeting. SD Advocacy Services will also place an article in their newsletter.

The committee is looking for funding sources for stipends. A couple of suggestions were DD Council and Lions Foundation. The Agency can pay for active consumers to attend through their IL or VR plans. Transportation will be an issue. The committee will look at options and check out the public transit systems. Child care will also be an issue for parents. The committee is considering a parent seminar either at the beginning or ending of the conference since parents may not be able to stay for the entire conference. It was suggested to offer a stipend for child care so parents can use their own sources. It was also mentioned to use the University systems to provide child care. Since the conference is being held during the school year, some children will have to stay home to attend school. The committee will explore various options.

Focus on Success is scheduled for September 30, October 1 and 2, 2008. It will be held in Sioux Falls at the Ramkota.

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and National Council of State Agencies of the Blind (NCSAB) Conferences in San Antonio: Rita Weber and Eric Weiss attended the NCSAB, and Gaye attended both the CSAVR and a portion of NCSAB. Rita told Board members it was exciting to see a variety of people with such a passion. She got a lot of ideas and various websites to help set up your home, pay bills, the hybrid car issues, etc. She learned that there are people on Capital Hill at all times to advocate for people with disabilities. She also learned members of NFB or ACB do have a voice. She also noted a common concern of blind agencies being combined with general agencies.

RSA spoke on their priorities which include reauthorization of the Rehab Act, consolidation of Title I but they don't see that happening, and separating Rehab Act from WIA but this issue is not moving very quickly. It appears that reauthorization won't take place prior to January 2009.

State's who participated in RSA monitoring activities this year were asked to select one of three options for a pilot project on technical assistance for quality assurance. South Dakota selected the Region VIII RCEP over the Clearing House at Utah State University and a national management firm that specializes in quality assurance. South Dakota was not selected to participate in the pilot project so will proceed with activities recommended by the Board until further direction is received from RSA.

Karen Wolfe from AFB spoke about the AFB website. Eric feels it will be good to use with new counselors and employers. A representative from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) spoke about the employment rate of people with disabilities and how the federal government is supposed to be a leader in hiring individuals with disabilities, however, that rate is going declining.

NTI is an organization that provides telework options so people with disabilities can work from home. The main question asked of the company was if the equipment was compatible with screen readers. The answer was "no." Fred Schroeder, former RSA commissioner, asked questions of RSA. He is an active member of NFB.

RSA is planning 3 conferences in June to provide technical assistance for State Directors and Board Chairs. South Dakota will be included in the conference to be held in St. Louis.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey: Dr. Alan Davis and Dr. Jay Trenhaile met with Gaye to discuss the validity and reliability of the results of our consumer satisfaction survey. Dr. Davis developed the survey that Montana uses to collect their data. He is willing to work with the Division and Board to develop a survey for South Dakota that addresses specific areas that we wish to measure. It would apply to everyone in the system and results would show the satisfaction of the overall program. The CSQ8 system is an 8 item scale that will be included in the survey to assure validity and reliability. The approximate cost to contract with Dr. Davis to assess the survey, analyze the results and prepare a report

would be around \$200. It was suggested to add questions regarding adjustment to blindness and job retention.

There are 3 benefits over the current survey system. It can prove validity and reliability, Dr. Davis can provide analysis which can help prove the benefit of the program, and it would allow SBVI to focus on SBVI's programs and services more than the current survey.

Gaye asked for direction from the Board. The Board supports contracting with Dr. Davis, and will be involved through the Strategic Planning and Policy committee. Chuck Fullenkamp made a motion to accept the above plan. Gayle seconded. Motion carried.

Public meetings: In past years, the Board has held a public meeting in conjunction with the NFB state convention. NFB will be having their convention in Rapid City on May 16 & 17, 2008. It was the Board's recommendation to host a public meeting yearly at the Rehab Center; however, there was only one consumer in attendance at last year's meeting at SDRC. SDAB and NFB host the events by promoting them to members and providing transportation and refreshments. The question was asked about having a public meeting in conjunction with Mid-Winter conference, but Mid-Winter already has a full schedule. The Agency gets input from SDAB state convention and Focus on Success but there is a timing issue with holding a public meeting in conjunction with those events. Gaye would like to continue with Board members facilitating the meetings.

Last year there was a third public meeting was held in conjunction with several other Boards in Aberdeen. Those opportunities to support public meetings may arise.

Gaye proposed to do a meeting in conjunction with NFB state convention in Rapid City, and also use the DDN/video conference system to conduct a second meeting. Sites will be reserved at all DHS locations that had the video conference system. Larry made a motion to accept Gaye's proposal. Gayle seconded. Motion carried.

A comment was made about low attendance at the meetings and if people fill out a survey, why do they need to reiterate their opinions at a public meeting.

Partners In Policy Making has a public meeting but it would not be open to the public. Partners is an organization that is sponsored by SD Advocacy Services, Parent Connection, and others. It is one weekend a month for six months. Five of these weekends are held in Pierre and the graduation weekend is held in Sioux Falls. Participants include teachers, family members, consumers, and professionals.

The public meetings are promoted by consumer organizations, as well as, counselors. There were good starter topics used at the meeting in Aberdeen. It was suggested to consider more talking sessions. Sandy will promote public meetings to peer support groups.

It was decided to do a public meeting in Rapid City in conjunction with the scheduling of the NFB convention, however, it will be held at a different location because the Alex Johnson hotel is not accessible. The second public meeting will be held via video conference with site in Aberdeen, Pierre and Sioux Falls at the Rehabilitation Center.

The Mid-Winter conference will be held in Pierre on March 3rd – 5th and will focus on staff training. The Governor's Luncheon recognizing employment of people with disabilities is scheduled on March 4th. This year's featured topics include culture of poverty, self-employment, ethics, and developing comprehensive assessments, ticket to work, and Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities.

The Fall Conference is geared for a broader audience including staff, private providers, community rehabilitation, etc., and is held in the fall of the year. If Board members want to attend either conference, costs will be covered. Please contact Eric or Gaye for assistance with registration and reimbursement.

Client Assistance Program: Brady Kerkman represented the Client Assistance Program (CAP). Kyle Kircher has resigned his position with SD Advocacy Services. His last day was November 27th. Brady will sit on the Board meetings when his schedule allows pending appointment of a CAP representative. He stated that SDAS supports the Board. He had no formal report for this meeting. One of the most recent cases he has been working on involves the font the SD Lions' website. Changes should be made to the website after the holidays.

Department of Education: Angie Boddicker reported that the results from the Youth Risk Behavior survey are in and South Dakota is doing better but there are still issues including injuries, tobacco, alcohol, STD's, and pregnancy. The reauthorization of No Child Left Behind is at a halt, and uncertain that it will be reauthorized. Schools can apply for grants from Qwest for AT. The Department is working on General Education content standards. Blunt Elementary won the Blue Ribbon School award. Special Ed office is planning the nine state performance training in February.

Native American VR: Dennis White Shield did not attend the meeting due to weather.

Parent Connection: Deanne Curran met with Elaine Roberts, Director of Parent Connection to be briefed for information to share with the Board. Dena Castro is leaving her position at Parent Connection and her replacement is Lisa Sanderson. A volunteer training for parents will be held in Chamberlain. Dare to Dream conference will be held in June 2008 in Pierre.

Statewide Independent Living Council: The council will be meeting on December 11 and 12 in Sioux Falls. The State Plan for Independent Living has been completed. During the RSA review, it was brought to the surface that none of the SILC funds are used for SILC or training for SILC activities mandated in the Rehabilitation Act. The SILC will be addressing these issues and reprioritizing activities based on the RSA Monitoring Review and the State Plan for Independent Living. The SILC is made up of

consumers and representatives from SBVI, DRS, DSS, Housing, CIL, and DOT. It covers a broad basis for all disabilities. The SILC's website is linked under the DRS web page at <http://dhs.sd.gov/drs/silc/silc.aspx>.

National Federation of the Blind: Wesley Scholl will be finishing out his term as local chapter President in April. NFB is working on changing the by-laws that haven't been amended since 1975. Currently, a spouse of a blind or visually impaired individual can't vote or be on the Board. They are trying to change this by-law. NFB members are participating in small fundraisers to help people. NFB is always looking for new members. NFB state convention will be held in May 2008.

South Dakota Association of the Blind: Steve Kelsey reported that the convention in October went well. They are also looking for new members. Ski for Light will be held January 21-25 at Terry Peak. This activity is great for adjustment to a disability and socializing. For more information, log on to: <http://www.bhsfl.org/>.

Business Enterprise Program: The statistical information on BEP is in the annual report. Gross sales were approximately \$747,000. This is down from previous years. Fewer sites and a different economy could be reasons for the decrease.

Jeff Kisecker reported that there are currently six vendors – 2 in Pierre, 1 in Sioux Falls, 1 in Yankton, 1 in Rapid City, and 1 in Huron. The Aberdeen site is still vacant, and is currently managed by a vendor from Pierre.

The Federal Prison wanted to remove all vending machines from prisoners. At this time they have not told the inmates of this plan. There are currently 25 vending machines and this change would lower that number to 8.

Independent Living: Sandy Neyhart was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. The IL information is also included in the annual report.

Vocational Rehabilitation: Bridget Stoeser is currently applying to SDSU to begin her Masters program in vocational rehabilitation counseling. SBVI was over budget in client services last year and are over budget to date for the current year. Eric has been comparing months from this year and previous years.

DHS employees (statewide) have raised enough funds to sponsor a guide dog. It took eight months to accomplish the goal. Employees voted on the name "Dakota".

PR Committee: The PR committee met by conference call prior to the meeting to discuss nominations for the Governor's Awards. SDAB is nominating Linda Biffert for the Citizen with Disability award. They have requested a letter of support for this nomination. Ed Pinkman made a motion to write a letter of support. Wesley Scholl seconded. Motion carried. The PR committee made the recommendation for the Board to nominate Steve Kelsey for Public Personnel Award. Larry made a motion to support

this recommendation. Ed Pinkman seconded. Motion carried. Jeff will work on both Steve's nomination and the letter of support for Linda's nomination.

Director's Comments: Gaye is not aware of any state legislation issues SBVI should be concerned about at this time but it is early. She will forward any information she receives to Board members. Rehab Act reauthorization is a concern at the federal level but it appears there will be little movement on this legislation in the current congressional session.

SBVI's budget request remained intact through the 2009 budget request at the DHS level and the Governor's office. January 24th is the date of the budget hearing with the appropriations committee. SBVI is not requesting much of an increase so Gaye doesn't expect any problems.

SDSBVI Task Force is funded by the Board of Regents. Phil Hatlen, a consultant from Texas School for the Blind, has been brought in for his expertise. There are 30 people on the Task Force including 2 legislators. The task force is split into 10 groups to review 10 goals based on the National Agenda. The goals include – referral, parent participation, personnel preparation, provision of educational services, array of services, assessment, access to instructional materials, expanded core curriculum, transition services, and ongoing professional development. Gaye is on the professional development group with Rose Moehring and Ray Tracy; and the transition services group with Elaine Roberts and Tim Neyhart.

The Board of SBVI didn't have an opportunity to thank Kyle Kircher. Gayle Aamold made a motion to get Kyle a plaque for his service to the Board. Deanne seconded. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be held at the Rehab Center in Sioux Falls on April 4, 2008.

Wesley Scholl made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ed Pinkman seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.